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ABSTRACT

Members of a task force from Lake City Community College met with task force members from the University of North Florida in order to examine the feasibility of defining performance outcomes for the Associate of Arts degree. Subsequently, a list of outcomes was formulated. Listed herein are fundamental qualities desired for all Associate of Arts graduates, each measurable against specified minimum standards. The performance outcomes are grouped in 10 areas of competency: (1) logical thinking; (2) communications skills; (3) reading; (4) writing; (5) computational skills; (6) physical, biological, and social science skills; (7) competencies in literature, philosophy, history, and religion; (8) knowledge of the physical and psychological self, and the self in social context; (9) an understanding of personal and cultural values; and (10) applied aesthetic skills. Additional competencies for the student having a declared major or clear career objective include achievement of a 3.0 grade point average and development of library research skills. Preparation of term papers and projects using library skills and other related competencies are suggested as is independent reading in anticipation of university courses. (Author/JDS)

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REPORT TO

STATE OF FLORIDA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ON

DOE PROJECT 740-190

SERVICES TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF DEFINING PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES OF AA DEGREES

BY: Dr. Walter A. Parnell, Jr.

Lake City Community College

JC 760 634

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Introduction

This report describes the efforts of a Task Force which was initiated by virtue of a contract with the State Department of Education. Lake City Community College was designated as the lead institution in an effort to examine the feasibility of defining performance outcomes for the Associate of Arts degree. The Task Force subsequently formulated a list of outcomes which may be used for further study and analysis.

Procedures for the Task Force

Members of the Task Force from Lake City Community College met with the designated members of the Task Force from the University of North Florida during July, 1974. The main product of the meeting was the decision that all departments at the University of N. Florida would be asked to set performance outcomes desired for AA degree graduates as they transfer to the University of North Florida. The various departments in the Transfer Division of LCCC were also asked to define competencies for students from the community college viewpoint. When the university and college departments had produced their statement of competencies the results were synthesized by Dr. Walter A. Parnell who was in possession of materials supplied to the college by way of President Herbert E. Phillips by Mars-Hill College in Ashville, North Carolina. The Mars-Hill project has focused on the total conversion to competency based education. The Task Force and this writer are indebted to Mars-Hill for their kind assistance.

The preliminary synthesis was made available to all departments at the University of N. Florida and at LCCC to provide

opportunity for additional in-put or revision of the synthesis. This report incorporates the many suggestions which were forthcoming from these departments.

In addition to departmental review of the preliminary synthesis, a Task Force from Florida State University, headed by Dr. Marion Neil, reviewed the preliminary effort and made valuable suggestions for improvements for the final statement of competencies.

Recommendations

This effort at defining competencies for the AA degree graduate has demonstrated to the participants that it is beneficial to establish communication between the university level and the community colleges on the question of competencies desired by these institutions. On the basis of suggestions made by the Florida State University Review Task Force, it is recommended that:

1. Similar efforts be continued involving as many universities as possible.
2. As many departments at the universities and community colleges be involved as would be considered feasible.
3. Coordinators be designated on each campus to facilitate the accomplishment of this effort.
4. A standard format for competency writing be created based upon catagories of competencies as suggested in the following report.

Plans for Follow-Up at Participating Institutions

Members of the Task Force from LCCC plan to survey all faculty members relative to attitudes toward the statement of competencies contained in this report. This will be accomplished with the intention that the curriculum will be examined for possible revision. The college will continue communication with other institutions interested in competency based instruction with the intention that ideas will be shared in the development and refinement of competency based education.

Based on the experience of the Task Force, it can be stated that it is indeed feasible to define competencies for the AA degree graduate. However, the task set by such effort at definition will be difficult. The following section of this report is a tentative effort at a preliminary statement of competencies. It may be viewed as setting forth unrealistically high standards; this may indeed be the case, but education in Florida cannot hope to achieve excellence without setting some high goals.

Performance Outcomes For The Associate Of Arts Degree

Lake City Community College has contracted with the State Department of Education to form a task force which would attack the problems of defining minimum performance outcomes for students pursuing an Associate of Arts degree.

This is a preliminary synthesis of efforts by various departments at Lake City Community College and departments at the University of North Florida to establish such minimum performance standards. This synthesis and the original efforts have been reviewed by a task force at the Florida State University. The following is a tentative effort at stating the minimum standards based on the assumption that there are desirable outcomes which should be expected of all students who pursue the Associate of Arts degree and in addition that there are standards which can reasonably be expected of students who plan to transfer to universities with the expectation of being adequately prepared for specialization in major areas of interest.

I. Fundamental qualities desired for all Associate of Arts graduates:

(A) Thought, language and communication

(1) Logical thinking. All students should be grounded in logical principles of thought with the assumption that exposure to logic will carry over into the students' communication and action. To accomplish the desired level of clarity and structure

of thought the student is expected to have the ability to:

a. Distinguish between statements that are couched in factual, descriptive, logical terms and those that are emotive, non-factual and intended to prejudice the thinker.

b. Identify logical fallacies and ambiguities of languages.

c. Have a command of deductive and inductive techniques for formulating arguments.

d. State the logical structure of simple arguments in terms of truth tables, rudimentary symbolic logic and/or Venn diagrams.

The student will demonstrate the minimum level of attainment in this area by scoring at the 60th percentile or above on tests formulated by the Math and English Departments.

(2) Communications Skills

a. The student is expected to have a command of the English language that demonstrates a grasp of basic grammatical patterns that is relatively free of fundamental grammatical errors. The student should be able to demonstrate this command of the English language both orally and in writing. Specifically, the student should be able to identify

and use:

(1) The various modes of communication

(2) The media of communication

(3) Roles in team efforts

(4) A vocabulary composed of the 2,000 most used words.

Evidence of such adequacy will be demonstrated if the student performs at the 50th percentile or above on the McGraw-Hill Writing Test, or a similar comprehensive test and scoring at the 60th percentile on oral tests administered by communications personnel.

(B) Basic Skills

(1) Reading

a. The student will demonstrate a proficient vocabulary at the 50th percentile or above on the Nelson-Denny Test or the McGraw-Hill Reading Test.

b. The student will demonstrate proficient reading comprehension of generalized college level materials as measured by scoring at the 50th percentile or above on the Nelson-Denny Test or on the McGraw-Hill Reading Test.

c. The student will demonstrate efficient reading rate flexibility, on generalized college level materials, as measured by appropriate rate efficiency checks and/or by scoring at the 50th percentile on the McGraw-Hill Reading Test.

(2) Writing

a. The student will demonstrate a mastery of the fundamentals of English grammar which is indicated by relative freedom from comma splices or run-on sentences, errors in agreement of subject and verb or of pronoun and antecedent, sentence fragments, misspelled words, capitalization and punctuation errors. The foregoing will be demonstrated by scoring at the 50th percentile or above on the McGraw-Hill Writing Test.

b. The student will demonstrate a command of sentence and paragraph structure by scoring at the 60th percentile level or above on themes written for and graded by English Department faculty.

(3) Computational

a. The student will have acquired the computational and technical facility expected of a student completing elementary algebra and will be able to make use of this knowledge in various concrete applications.

b. The student will be able to manipulate algebraic formulas.

c. The student will be able to translate verbal problems into algebraic equations at the elementary algebra level.

d. The student will be able to apply the fundamental concepts of geometry to any given appropriate situation, e.g., measurement (Metric and English) of plane and solid figures, interpretation of graphs, parallel and perpendicular lines, etc.

The foregoing computational facility will have been demonstrated if the student scores at the 50th percentile level or above on the quantitative section of CLEP, or scores at the 60th percentile on department-constructed tests.

II. Basic Studies. The basic studies component of the curriculum which leads to the Associate of Arts degree is designed to help the student achieve competence in the various areas which have traditionally been designated as liberal arts. With this course of study the student should: achieve a working knowledge of his own culture and achieve broad knowledge of various international cultures; the student should be able to appraise his own being as an individual in the environment; the student should have achieved demonstrable appreciation for the creative efforts of man; the student should have formulated a consistent set of values that is compatible with the value system of his culture.

(A) Science--The student should have the ability to use the scientific method of inquiry. Such ability shall include but not be limited to: Acquisition of obser-

vational skills, statistical analysis of data, use of probability projection techniques, construction of workable hypotheses, use of appropriate theories, recognition and use of natural laws, use of simple computer techniques, and use of simple experimentation without close supervision.

(1) Physical--The student should have the ability to:

a. Use scientific notation to express quantities and to multiply or divide these quantities.

b. Use the Metric system and appropriate instruments to measure 1, 2 and 3 dimensional objects, weight, volume, time and temperature; then calculate from these measurements density, velocity, acceleration, force, heat, momentum, expansion, elasticity, freezing and melting points, boiling points, inertia, energy.

c. Identify and give characteristics of the atom by use of the periodic table; use valence rules, write simple formulas and find formula weights.

d. Interpret chemical equations quantitatively and qualitatively. Relate characteristics and behavior associated with the three states of matter.

e. Relate areas of the physical sciences to specific current problems of environment and society.

(2) Biological--The biological sciences incorporate the aspects of knowledge of physical science (1, above) as applied to biological events. The student should be able to demonstrate:

a. Knowledge of the molecular structure of life including: The distinction between organic compounds or inorganic compounds, ability to identify at least three properties of the carbon atom, ability to describe the four classes of molecules found in all living cells, the ability to identify the role of protein in living systems, ability to identify the functions of the molecule in the living cell.

b. Knowledge of the structure of the cell and its metabolizing characteristics.

c. Knowledge of movement of materials by cells including: Procurement of materials, distribution of synthesized products and elimination of waste.

d. Fundamental grasp of nutrition.

e. Knowledge of the principle of photosynthesis.

f. Knowledge of biological control systems.

g. Knowledge of the principles of reproduction.

h. Knowledge of genetics.

i. The concept of the biosphere including the interactions of organisms in ecosystems.

(3) Social--The student should be able to demonstrate:

a. Knowledge of scientific approaches to an understanding of an individual including theoretical formulations for explaining selected individual behavioral patterns.

b. Knowledge of group organization among people including emphasis on social, economic and political units.

c. Knowledge of patterns of interrelationships, processes, and reciprocal effects among groups and institutions of a society.

The student will be considered able to perform adequately in the areas of science if he has passed all department constructed tests with an average of 70% or if he scores at the 50th percentile or above on the appropriate CLEP tests.

(B) Humanities--The student should have the ability to synthesize knowledge about the questions which have been traditionally considered basic to man's rational being. The questions: What is man? What can I know? What may I hope? What ought I do? The various answers which have been created by historical man lives in the present as a great humanizing force. The student should have the ability to analyze present problems in the light of knowledge of the various dimensions of human thought.

(1) Literature--The student should demonstrate knowledge of:

a. The fact that in literature, as in life, some actions and statements are more significant than

others.

b. The significance of pattern or form in the imaginative work of art.

c. How to write a theme about an imaginative work of art which indicates that he is able to follow and understand both action and dialogue while also indicating knowledge of the fact that a theme must contain a dominating plan or idea.

d. The intimate connection between images and ideas and that a concept or generalization seeks of its nature the clarifying image and that an image becomes a symbol when it embodies an idea.

(2) Philosophy--The student should demonstrate knowledge of:

a. The major fields in philosophy with particular attention to the areas of Epistomology and Ethics.

b. The thought of eastern and western cultures with a variety of alternative thought systems inherent therein.

c. The critical and analytical tools afforded by training in philosophical thought.

d. Personal commitment to a philosophical system and the implications for one's interaction with other persons and other cultures.

(3) History--The student should be able to:

a. Identify and explain the most important institutions and concepts that have become established and accepted throughout nations' histories.

b. Trace the development, growth and interaction of societies from the beginning of history, showing their influences on one another and their contributions to human culture.

c. Understand the relationship between the similarities found in previous societies and our own in order to see the value of a knowledge of man's past.

(4) Religion--The student should demonstrate:

a. An understanding of the religious viewpoint as reflected in the Judeo-Christian Religion and in the major religions of the east.

b. How religions agree on the basic questions about the nature of man and his being in the world.

c. How religions contrast in regards to how man is to attain his spiritual goals.

Competence in the foregoing areas in the humanities will be demonstrated by the student attaining an average of 70% on department-created tests or scoring at the 50th percentile or above on the appropriate CLEP tests or by scoring at an acceptable level on written or oral tests administered by a panel of

faculty members in this area.

(C) Self Knowledge--This area of the basic studies curriculum emphasizes the need for knowledge of self as manifested in the aspects of psychological, physical and social context of the individual. Awareness of the self as a unique entity that is at the same time a subjective reality and an interactive being is being sought in this competency.

(1) Psychological--The student should have the ability to:

a. View the self as a nexus of emotions which are the result of psycho-physiological processes; anticipate the consequences of action as related to emotions and formulate methods of controlling emotions.

b. Identify the basic structure of the brain and its relation to, and affect upon, the body.

c. Analyze personal experience as to the components which offer the most satisfaction and fulfillment.

d. Identify and set realistic personal goals and evaluate the goals in light of accumulating personal experience.

e. Establish attitudes of self-confidence and self-discipline to accomplish personal goals.

(2) Physical--The student should:

a. Demonstrate an understanding of the physical body as an organism which interacts with the

physical world.

b. Evaluate present physical skills and formulate means of attaining a desired level of ability.

c. Develop physical abilities and control of movements of the body through participation in activities that demand and increase the skills required for bodily coordination.

d. Participate in meaningful, physical activity, in lifetime sports, beyond the college experience.

(3) Social Context--The student should have the ability to:

a. Understand the social units within which he must act as an individual.

b. Analyze relationships with other persons including peers, parents, and authority figures.

c. Understand how the individual functions in the social unit especially noting consequences and implications of individual action within the context of the group.

d. Understand the processes which produce loneliness or alienation.

e. Demonstrate an ability to interact effectively with individuals and groups.

Measurement for attainment of those qualities listed above will center in a sense of well being, confidence in one's rela-

tionships with others, assurance of physical adequacy and the inherent will to live. Specifically, attainment may be demonstrated in structured yet open situations such as Human Potential Seminars.

(D) Values--The value component of the curriculum is integrated into many different areas. The student should have the ability to recognize the difference between fact and value, the possible emotive origin of value and the means whereby individual values may be harmonized with larger cultural values. The student should also understand the difference between the concept of values as relative and values as absolute. The student should have the ability to:

(1) Identify dominant personal values and establish consistency among these values.

(2) Identify the major values of one's own culture.

(3) Identify the principal values of at least one culture other than one's own culture.

(4) Evaluate the ethical principles which underlie widely accepted rules of conduct.

(5) Understand religious commitment as creative of value systems.

(6) Identify the primary values of a technological society as compared with the values of a non-technological society.

(7) Defend personal commitment to a value system.

(8) In general, cultivate an attitude of open-minded-

ness and inquiry.

The student will be deemed to have achieved some measure of proficiency in the area of value if he consistently makes adjustments between his own values and those of others; if he apparently attempts to minimize prejudices; if he judges other persons' values sparingly. If he rises above the petty to the level of a well-adjusted individual who exhibits a consistently caring attitude.

(E) Aesthetics--Aesthetics deals primarily with the affective aspect of man. The student should be able, in general, to identify those elements in his perceptual field which are most productive of an appreciation for art, such as expressiveness, form, and rhythm, etc. The student should recognize the distinction between auditory, visual and tactile sense data in formulating an appreciation for the various art forms. The student should have the ability to:

(1) Perform in some artistic activity and exhibit the creative results of such activity.

(2) Demonstrate knowledge of the various elements of artistic activity.

(3) Understand the basic organizational plans in the visual and auditory arts.

(4) Demonstrate knowledge of alternative aesthetic theories.

(5) Understand the difference between his own aesthetic values and those aesthetic values of another culture.

(6) Defend his aesthetic perceptions against the challenge of alternative aesthetic viewpoints.

The student will have demonstrated overall proficiency in this area when he has created a work of art which manifests an understanding of the basic aesthetic elements. The student should score at the 70th percentile or above on tests constructed to measure the cognitive aspects of aesthetics and will otherwise demonstrate general sophistication and understanding and application of aesthetic principles as determined by the appropriate faculty.

III. Area of Specialization

For the student who has a declared major or clear career objectives, there are additional expectations in fulfillment of the requirements for the Associate of Arts degree. The student is expected in general to select electives which tend to give background in the major area as prescribed by the university to which the student plans to transfer. In addition, the student would have the following competencies.

A. The student should pursue a course of study, through judicious selection of electives, that is prescribed by the selected university as desirable background or prerequisite courses, achieving a minimum of a 3.0 average on a 4.0 scale.

B. Research Skills

All who pursue the AA degree should demonstrate ability to:

(1) Recognize the function of, and be familiar with the

following aspects of library service:

a. Reserve Section

b. Reference Collection

c. The Stacks

d. Microfilm Collection

e. Card Catalog

f. Periodical Indexes

(2) Prepare N term papers, or N projects requiring research using competency in (1), using N sources each from the Reference, Circulating, and Periodical Collections, according to Turabian or other specified forms.

(C) The student would obtain reading lists for anticipated university courses and pursue an independent reading program in as many sources as possible, with the assistance of the appropriate advisor.

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